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LETTER TO THE POPE ON HIS VISIT TO AUSCHWITZ

Léon Degrelle.

In exile 20th May, 1979.

TO HIS HOLINESS POPE JOHN-PAUL 11 The Vatican City.

I Most Holy Father.

I am Leon Degrelle and I was the Leader of Belgian Rexism (The "Rexist" Movement) before the Second World War. During the War I was the Commander of the Belgian Volunteers on the Eastern Front, and fought in the 28th Walloon Division of the Waffen S.S. This will certainly not be regarded as a recommendation by everyone. I am, however, a Catholic like you, and I believe that I am thus entitled to write to you as a brother in the faith.

I am concerned by the announcement in the press that during your coming visit to Poland, from 2nd to 12th June 1979, you are going to concelebrate Mass with all the Polish Bishops at the former concentration camp of Auschwitz. Let me say straightaway that I find it very edifying to pray for the dead, whoever they may be and at any place, even in front of the brand-new crematory ovens with their immaculate firebricks.

Even so, I am apprehensive. The fact of being Polish and your adherence to this loyalty ceaselessly reappears in your pontifical behaviour. It is human. You are a patriot who participated very deeply in your youth in a tough bellicose conflict. If old resentments made too strong an impression on you, however, you might be tempted to take part, having now become Pope, in secular quarrels which history has still not sufficiently clarified. What responsibility, for example, did the various belligerents have for the outbreak of the Second World War? What role did certain instigators play? Everyone knows that your Prime Minister, Colonel Beck, was a rather dubious individual. Did he act with the requisite degree of level-headedness in 1939? Did he not reject, with undue arrogance, certain chances of reaching an accommodation in 1939 with the German Government?

And what about later on? Was the War really as it has been described? What were the faults, or even the crimes, of both sides? Have their respective aims always been evaluated objectively? Has not enemy doctrine been misrepresented, either through failing to give it proper consideration, or deliberately because propaganda demanded it? Were not plans attributed to the enemy, and acts assumed to have taken place, whose real existence has never been substantiated?

The Church has always been much better informed than anyone else. For two thousand years, however, it has had a policy of circumspection, and it has always avoided taking up precipitous positions.

It has only ever set out to judge from evidence, and to do so in a calm manner, when time has sorted out the rages and the passions, and the wheat from the tares.

In particular, it was conspicuous for extreme restraint during the Second World War. It was carefully guarded not to peddle the lunatic speculations prevalent at the time. When you are on your native soil, Most Holy Father, and particularly at Auschwitz -where you may perhaps be recaptivated by certain incomplete and partisan mental visions of the past - are you simply going to pray . . . ?

I fear above all that your prayers, and even simply your presence in such places, may be immediately diverted from their profound significance and used as a smoke-screen by unscrupulous propagandists, who will employ them to relaunch hate campaigns under your cover. These campaigns are based on lies and have poisoned the whole subject of Auschwitz for more than a quarter of a century.

Yes, I mean lies. The legend of the massive exterminations at Auschwitz exploited the collective psychosis which, owing to uncontrolled gossip, had unhinged numerous World War Two internees. Since 1945 the whole world has been assailed by this legend. Hundreds of lies have been repeated in thousands of books in an increasingly virulent rage. They are reproduced in full colour in apocalyptic films, which are outrageous in the way they flay not only truth and probability, but commonsense, the most elementary arithmetic, and the facts themselves.

I have been told, Most Holy Father, that you were in the Resistance during the Second World War, with all the physical risks enailed in a form of warfare contrary to International Law. Some add that you were interned at Auschwitz. Like so many others you left it, since here you are Pope: a Pope who, from all the evidence, did not smell too much Zyklon B gas! Having been on the spot, Your Holiness must know better than anyone else that the mass gassings of millions of people never took place. Sectarian propagandists hark back so much to these great collective massacres, but did you - as a prime witness - personally see just one being carried out ... ?

People certainly suffered at Auschwitz, but others have suffered too. All wars are cruel. Hundreds of thousands of women and children were horribly carbonised on the direct orders of the Allied Heads of State. At least as many 'bought it' at Dresden or Hamburg, at Hiroshima or Nagasaki, as suffered or sometimes died in the concentration camps of the Third Reich. (Of the internees, 25 per cent were political or members of the Resistance, and 75 per cent were conscientious objectors, sexual perverts or common criminals.)

Exhaustion used to eat them up. The collapse of morale would eliminate the weaker souls. The cruelties of some guards, which are inevitable in any prison system, further added to the bitterness of the loss of individual privacy from having so many people crowded together. Some of these guards were Germans, but more often than not they were non-Germans: 'Kapos' and other internees who had become the torturers of their companions. There must also have been some depraved individuals who originated, in one camp or another, novel ways of killing people, tortures, monstrous whims, and summary murders.

Despite all the above, the Calvary of the majority of the exiles would have come to an end in the joy of the long-awaited day of the return to peace, had not the catastrophe of epidemics such as typhus, which killed many thousands, befallen them during the last weeks. These epidemics were infinitely increased by the incredible bombings which severed the railway-lines and roads, and sent boats loaded with refugees straight to the bottom, as at Lübeck. These raids annihilated the electric networks, the waterpipes and the reservoirs, cut off all revictualling, imposed famine everywhere, and rendered all transport of evacuees appalling.

Two-thirds of the internees who died during the Second World War perished at this time, victims of typhus, dysentery, starvation, and of the interminable delays in the pulverised channels of communication. This is established by the official figures. At Dachau, for example, following the same statistics of the International Committee, 54 internees died in January 1944 and 101 in February 1944. In 1945, however, 2,888 died in January and 3,977 in February! Of the total of 25,613 internees who died in this camp in 1940, 1941, 1942, 1943, 1944 and 1945, 19,296 perished during the last seven months of hostilities! At that time the aerial terrorism of the Allies no longer even served a military purpose, since Allied victory had been assured from the beginning of 1945. It no longer required this last dreadful pulping in any way.

Without the savage folly of these blind poundings, thousands of internees would have survived, instead of being converted into macabre exhibits in April and May 1945. Swarms of press and film carrion-beetles bustled about these exhibits greedy for photos and films. These were taken at sensational angles and were of an assured commercial yield. They still went to the trouble later on of retouching, superimposing, distorting and faking these visual documents in order to add finishing touches to the horror, which produced even more hatred.

The information 'artists' could just as easily have taken miles of similar film of the bodies of German women and children, except that they were a hundred times more numerous. They had died in exactly the same way: from hunger and from cold, or machine-gunned on the same frozen flat-waggons and on the same blood-stained roads. But as with the photos of the immense extermination of German towns which had buried six hundred thousand bodies, care was taken not to make such pictures known! They might have caused disquiet and, above all, prevented hatred . . . The truth is that in 1945 typhus, dysentery, hunger, and the numberless blastings of an unchecked airforce, hit foreign internees and the civilians of the Third Reich indiscriminately.

They were both matched by abominations of a type resembling those at the End of the World.

As for the rest, Most Holy Father, the assertions about an explicit plan for genocide, and in particular, the alleged entombing of millions of Jews in phantom ZyMon B gas chambers* at Auschwitz, have been hurled and hurled again in an incredible din for so many years. They do not, however, stand up to the slightest serious scientific examination. In thirty years not a single document has been able to furnish the slightest official proof.

It is ridiculous to imagine, and above all to pretend, that 24,000 people could have been gassed at Auschwitz each day - in batches of 3,000 at a time - in a room of 400 cubic metres. Still less could this have happened, in batches of 700 or 800, in buildings with a floor space of 25 square metres and a height of 1.9 metres, as has been claimed with regard to Beizec. Twenty-five square metres is equivalent to the floor space of a bedroom! Would you succeed, Most Holy Father, in putting 700 or 800 people in your bedroom?

Seven hundred to 800 people on 25 square metres works out at 30 people to the square metre. A square metre 1.9 metres high is the size of a telephone box! Can you picture, Your Holiness, thirty people piling into a telephone box in St. Peter's Square or at the Great Seminary of Warsaw? Or on a simple shower stand?

If the miracle of thirty human bodies planted like asparagus in the goldfish bowl of a telephone-box, or the one of the 800 people crowded around your camp-bed, had ever been realised, a second miracle would have immediately been indispensable. Otherwise the 3,000 people - the equivalent of two regiments - crammed together so fantastically in the Auschwitz chamber, or the 700 to 800 people piled up at Belzec (on account of having 30 occupants to the square metre), would have perished almost immediately as they would have been asphyxiated by the lack of oxygen!

There would not even have been any need for gas! Before one had finished piling up the last arrivals, bolting the doors and dropping the gas into the room, most would have already stopped breathing! ZyMon B would reach only corpses. (This gas was supposedly either dropped into the room through slits, through holes, by chimney, in the form of hot air, in a vapour, or was discharged along the ground: you can take your pick)

As anyone interested in science can find out, this Zyklon B was, in any case, inflammable, adhesive and dangerous to use. A twenty-one hour wait would consequently have been necessary, even indispensable, before the first corpse was pulled out of the wondrous chamber.

**Editor's Note: Had the German authorities planned such a method of extermination, they undoubtedly would have used a non-toxic gas such as nitrogen to asphyxiate them.*

As has been related to us with great pleasure and a thousand spicy details, one would then have been able to extract all the gold teeth and all the filled teeth, the latter being prudent hiding-places for diamonds! This would supposedly have been done to each batch of 6,000 rigid jaws (3,000 people) which

death had drawn together, and to 48,000 jaws each day - if one believes the official figure of 24,000 gassed every day in Auschwitz alone!

As holy as you are, Most Holy Father, you must be more or less resigned to enduring the dentist sometimes. Have you ever had a tooth extracted? Or two teeth? When this occurs one is on best terms with the dentist who is operating. He has potent mirrors trained on the jaws, ideal instruments, and a patient who consents to his injunctions. Now how long does an extraction take under these optimal conditions? A quarter of an hour? Half an hour?

According to the legend the foul corpses at Auschwitz were lying on the ground and it was necessary to distend the hardened jaws which was done with much difficulty, relax them, and then open them wide, all with necessarily primitive instruments. According to the official figures there were only eight operatives to skim the cement without lighting, and thus scrutinise not just one bad spot in the teeth, but the two entire jaws. They then had to extract, dissect and empty the teeth - all in less time than a perfectly equipped specialist ...

Would His Holiness please take a pencil? At a quarter of an hour per jaw, and with eight desperate drawers engaged on the dissection, that makes 16 bodies dealt with an hour, and 160 in a working day of 10 hours without a minute's rest! Even if one was a stakhanovite of dentistry and one doubled the rate of extractions which is in any case physically impossible, that would make 320! Well then, Most Holy Father, what about the batches of 3,000 Jews in one go? And what about the days when 24,000 were gassed by Zyklon B? That meant 48,000 jaws to deal with and more than 760,000 teeth to scrutinise daily. Simply confining oneself to the 6,000,000 dead Jews which propaganda ceaselessly repeats to us over and over again (some have doubled or tripled the figure), these drawers would still have been in full operation for years after the War! These extractions, and these alone, with ten hours of uninterrupted labour, would have taken up 1,875 working days of the whole team!

But these extractions were only a preliminary formality. It appears that it was also necessary to crop millions of heads of hair. Then, according to what all the 'historians' of Auschwitz affirm ex cathedra, all the anuses and wombs were next examined, before the bodies were passed to the ovens. This was in order to retrieve the diamonds and -pieces of jewellery-, which might have been in the depths of these anuses and wombs to filch! Can you imagine it, Most Holy Father? Six million anuses and three or four million wombs to scour from top to bottom, when it has been explained to us that at the end of the massive gassings, the bodies were streaming with excrement, menstrual blood and dressings! The fingers and hands of the operatives would have had to grope in these foul organs in order to locate the hidden diamonds, take them out sticky, wash them, and wash themselves, 24,000 times a day for the anuses and 15 to 20,000 times a day for the wombs! It is absolutely mad! The whole business is crazy! And we have not mentioned the complementary activities: the manufacture of fertilizer and cakes of soap which certain people, like the raving Professor Poliakov, have noted without flinching!

These gassings, croppings, extractions and organ scourings were supposedly repeated on 6,000,000 Jews, or on 7,000,000, or - according to Father Riquet - on 15 million, or - according to the Larousse Dictionary - on 20 million (more than the number of Jews in the whole world)! If it was necessary to accept the official claims of the manipulators of the 'history' of Auschwitz as correct, these operations would still be continuing! You could still hold your nose near the gas chambers, Most Holy Father, and still perspire from the heat of the Auschwitz ovens during your concelebrated mass!

If the number of real and natural deaths at Auschwitz had been multiplied by ten or twenty, the swindle could have maintained a certain aspect of verisimilitude. But as for the gassings of 700 or 800 people per bedroom, too much lying ends up looking grotesque. Only the unfathomable and unimaginable stupidity of fools can explain how so much nonsense could be invented, related, proclaimed with great trumpet blasts, filmed in an extraordinary barrage, and believed.* I believe," some individual bravely declares about the Holocaust, "everything I've been told!"

What an exemplary admission!

When the Mass is concelebrated at Auschwitz all hearts will be gripped by love of God and man, and will participate in a renewal of the Sacrifice. How can one imagine for a minute, Most Holy Father, that a priest, a Pope, could seem to screen waves of such stupid hatred and such extravagant lies under his

pallium, at the very moment he elevated the chalice to heaven? Such hatred and lies are the complete opposite of the touching teaching of Christ! No! Certainly not! It is just not possible!

A hundred paces from Auschwitz's fake gas chamber, your message can only be one of charity, fraternity, and equally, one of truth, without which all doctrine collapses. You are going to Auschwitz in order to be moved and to contemplate at one of the high-places of human suffering. The causes of that suffering and those responsible will be determined objectively with time by a serene History. They will not be determined by resorting to forced confessions or the digressions of false witnesses.

**Editor's Note: And what of the enormous amount of energy required to reduce six million bodies to dust after gassing?*

The Pope is above these affrays. He is close to the souls who have suffered, and who, by suffering, have risen spiritually, for there is no purgatory, Calvary or death, which cannot become sublime.

Sacrifice, physical and mental suffering, and anguish, have caused great flourishings of the soul to spring up in lives which might normally have remained mediocre. This happened everywhere: on the battlefields of the Second World War, where so many soldiers fell after immense sufferings, as much as in the work camps where numerous people died, victims of conflicts which overtook and crushed them. Such was the case at Auschwitz, and such was the case on the Eastern Front throughout the years of struggle and sacrifice by millions of young Europeans who, from 1941 to 1945, faced the Communist onslaught.

Atrocities have certainly been committed throughout the entire history of man. Auschwitz, at any rate, was not the first and it will not be the last. We are seeing that only too well at the moment, when so many defenceless women and children are being massacred in the Palestinian camps. They are being reduced to pulp by the Israeli airforce which is making the Law of Retaliation rebound on to innocent people, in whose memory, unfortunately, a concelebrated mass will probably never be sung . . . Powerful people have abused their power hundreds of times. Nations have lost their heads. Not just one in particular, but all of them. Alongside millions of pure and unselfish hearts who offered their youth to an ideal, Germany has had, like everyone else, its share of detestable beings guilty of inadmissible violence. But what country has not?

Did not the France of the French Revolution invent the Terror, the guillotine and the executions by drowning in the Loire? Napoleon did not intern people, but did he not forcibly enlist hundreds of thousands of civilians from occupied countries, who were sent to die for his glory? There were 51,000 just from Belgium! That is to say more Belgians than perished during the First World War, or in the concentration camps of the Third Reich!

Nearer our own time, in 1944 and 1945, did not a certain de Gaulle preside over the massacre of tens of thousands of opponents who had been dubbed "collaborators"? More recently still, in Indochina and Algeria, did not France cram hundreds of thousands of people into extremely tough concentration camps, where sadists were not lacking? Did not these people include not only the rebellious and those who refused to submit, but hostages, and ordinary civilians rounded up in large numbers? A French general even made a public eulogy of torture.

And what about Britain, with its bombardments of unfortified cities like Copenhagen, its execution of Sepoys tied to the mouths of cannons, its crushing of the Boers, and its Transvaal concentration camps, where thousands of women and children perished in indescribable misery? And what of Churchill unleashing his abominable terror bombings on the civilian population of the Reich, which burnt them in their cellar annihilated about two hundred thousand with phosphorous, and women and children in one night in the gigantic crematory of Dresden? I use the word "about" because only an approximate estimate could be made by calculating the weight of the ashes!

And what about the United States? Did it not rise in power thanks to the frightful slavery of millions of Blacks, who were branded like animals, and thanks to the almost complete extermination of the Red Indians, who had been the original owners of the coveted territory? Was it not the dispenser of the atomic bomb in 1945? Even yesterday, did it not number undoubted torturers amongst its troops in Vietnam?

And we have not even dwelt on the tens of millions of victims of the tyranny of the USSR, or on its present day gulags. I strongly fear that no one will breathe a word about them at the time of your next visit to the "restored" Auschwitz camp, which has itself been void of occupants for decades!

No one will deny that life at Auschwitz was hard and sometimes very cruel. In the camps of the victors of 1945, however, the sadists and the torturers had quickly come to blossom in equal numbers. They did so, moreover, with less excuse, if one accepts that a world war is capable of providing excuses .

I would not like to spoil, Most Holy Father, the pleasure which you are going to have in rediscovering your country. Even so, I must point out the following! You have been keen to demonstrate the moral elevation of your valiant native land to best advantage by glorifying its admirable patron, Saint Stanislas. Has not your native land, however, also known times of crime and baseness? When you come to tread the Polish soil of Auschwitz, which is so evocative of the last Jewish tragedy, would it be improper - if one wanted to be fair - to recall innumerable other Jews who were earlier put to death in horrible pogroms, which occurred right across your country for centuries? These Jews were tortured, had their throats slit, and were hanged by your fellowcountrymen. Though Catholics, they have not always been any the more angelic!.

I can still hear the Apostolic Nuncio at Brussels telling me, at his excellent table, how the Polish peasants used to crucify Jews on the doors of their barns. He had previously been Nuncio at Warsaw, and was to be the future Cardinal Micara.

"Those Jew pigs!" the unctuous prelate would exclaim, in a spirit which hardly reflected the gospels. Believe me, these words were spoken just like that.

Was the Church itself, Most Holy Father, always so tender? Even in the mid-eighteenth century it still used to burn Jews with great pomp and ceremony, especially right in the middle of the town of Madrid. The Church, however, used to burn them alive! The Inquisition was not a sheep-fold. The massacres of the 10. Albigenses were perpetrated under the aegis of St. Thomas Aquinas. The massacre of St. Bartholomew's Eve was the joy and heart's delight of the Pope, your predecessor, who rose in the dead of night to celebrate this happy event with an enthusiastic Te Deum. He even arranged to commemorate it by striking a medal! And what about the 30,000 so-called witches, who were burnt at the stake throughout Christendom? Even in the last century the Papacy was still enforcing the ghetto at Rome.

Essentially, Most Holy Father, we are worth very little, be we Pope or Ayatollah, Parisians or Prussians, Soviets or New Yorkers. There is nothing to glory in unduly! We have all been, in our bad moments, as savage as one another. The fact that we are all on a par does not justify anything or anybody, but it does nevertheless oblige us not to hand out excommunications or absolutions with too much impetuosity or 'benevolence'.

Human savagery will only be driven back by answering hatred with fraternity. Hate disarms itself, as everything disarms itself, but not by being endlessly served up again with ever sharper sauces, nor by being exacerbated, as in the case of Auschwitz, with a lot of lunatic exaggerations, lies, and false "confessions". The latter have been stacked with screaming contradictions, and were extracted by torture and terror in both Soviet and American gaols. In the Hideous era of Nuremberg* they were just the same.

Some people might have thought that the freebooters of the concentration camp exhibitionism and the forgers who have turned the ---Six Million Jews" into the most remunerative financial swindle of the century, were at last going to put an end to this exploitation.

An imposing religious ceremony, however, is going to unfurl itself in your presence, amid the fake set on Auschwitz's stage. Thanks to all its pomp a strong attempt is going to be made, by means of a gigantic barrage from television and the press, to turn you into an unquestioned endorser for cheques of hatred. Your name is worth its weight in gold to all these gangsters. As if the first Holocaust was not enough, the whole world is going to be left a Holocaust No. 2. It will not cost a thousand million dollars this time, since Your Holiness will have furnished brazen producers with the most sumptuous of extras for absolutely nothing!

Whatever its circulation and impact amongst the dupes may have been, Holocaust No. 1 was nothing but a gigantic Hollywood racket of rare vulgarity. It was above all aimed at emptying the pockets of hundreds of millions of ill-informed viewers. Its damage could only be temporary, however, for one would soon have been forced to note the farcical nature of its extravagances. They would not stand up to the conscientious examination of an historian.

On the other hand, Most Holy Father, this Holocaust of yours will be produced with great ceremony at Auschwitz itself. This will be done by a Pope present in the flesh and blood, dressed in all his pontifical majesty, and anointed with truthfulness. In the eyes of a Christendom hoaxed by sacrilegious manipulators, this Holocaust No. 2 with a Pope facing a sacred altar strongly runs the risk of appearing to be a quasi-divine confirmation of all the propaganda hatched by hatemongers and usurers. This will be especially so at the time of the Sacrifice.

Your evocation of the War in front of the Polish tombs at Monte Casino has already disturbed many of the faithful. If one is to believe what the press said at the time, you appear to have retained only certain fragmentary and partisan aspects of it. Your ostentatious appearance at Auschwitz, Most Holy Father, can only disturb even more of them, for there is no doubt that you are going to be 'taken for a ride' as the popular saying goes. It is obvious.

This religious ceremony, certainly at the moment of the concelebration, may seem to your mind to be purely an appeal for the reconciliation of men to replace, at last, men's hatred. The freebooters of the press and screen, however, have firmly decided to make you dive, mitre first and in your brand-new white cassock, into this yawning trap of Auschwitz.

"Homo homini lupus," say the sectarians.

"Homo homini frater," says every Christian who is not a hypocrite. We are all brothers: the internee suffering behind his barbed-wire and the haggard soldier on edge behind his sub-machine gun. All of us who survived till 1945 must pardon and must love: you the persecuted person who has become Pope, I the warrior who has become persecuted, and the millions of human beings who all lived through the immense tragedy of the Second World War, with our ideals, our Man, our weaknesses and our faults. Life does not have any other meaning. God does not have any other meaning.

Well, what else matters in the end?

In spite of the spiritual imprudences that may be involved with a Pope taking positions in unsettled historical debates, and in spite of the hate-filled fanatics who will exploit the dramatic nature of your epic without delay I will - from the remoteness of my distant exile - add my devotion to you on the day you celebrate your Mass at Auschwitz.

I am, Most Holy Father, filially yours.

Léon Degrelle.

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Asociación cultural "Amigos de Léon Degrelle"

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Dª Jenne Marie Brevet (viuda de Léon Degrelle) Presidente: D. José Luis Jerez Riesco. Autorización del ministerio de justicia n°160.621 del 22 Marzo 1996.

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